

WEST HARTFORD SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes

January 21, 2014

Members present: Ray Guenter (Acting Chair), Linda Hanson, Robert Kennedy, Ruth Kurien, Connie Melo, Ellen Phillips, Donna Sterling, Ted Thomas
Members absent: Philip Walker
Staff present: Kathleen Faroni, Susan Huleatt, Gina Marino
Guests: Jim Doran, Sally Nolan, Julia Evan Star
Volunteer Secretary: Amy Lynn Silverman

The meeting was called to order at 10:32am by Acting Chair Ray Guenter.

The minutes of the November 19, 2013 meeting were approved unanimously.

Chairman's Report

Ray Guenter presented Phil Walker's report. The Annual Report to the Town was filed. With the help of Senator Beth Bye, Phil has been trying to contact all four state legislators about coming to a meeting. He also emailed Edith Prague, the Commissioner of the Department of Aging, with an invitation. Phil is also reaching out to Congressman John Larson and Maureen McIntyre of the NCAA.

Acting Chair Ray Guenter noted that Shari Cantor's father passed away recently and asked for a moment of silence. Amy Silverman will send a condolence note to Shari on behalf of the Commission.

Transportation

Ruth Kurien reported that the business plan is in the works as is a job description for a part-time Executive Director. ITN has received a \$2,500 grant from Wesleyan University through the Learning by Giving Foundation to be used to disseminate additional information for the recruitment of volunteers especially in the Middletown area. The Learning by Giving Foundation seeks to help nonprofits that work on increasing equal access in communities.

Commission on Aging

Julia Evans Star is the Executive Director of the Commission which was established in 1993 by the Legislature. It is not the State Department on Aging. The purpose of the Commission is as follows:

- ☐ Propose, support and/or critique legislation that will improve the quality of life for older residents in Connecticut. For example, we've led the formation of public-private sector partnerships such as the Connecticut Elder Action Network and chaired and managed the Long-Term Care Advisory Council and the Money Follows the Person steering committee.
- ☐ Meet regularly with—and serve as a resource to—representatives of state agencies and other state officials and legislators to review and comment on policies, budgets and procedures that affect older adults.
- ☐ Provide information on issues facing older adults to the business and education community, state and local governments and the news media.
- ☐ Develop and promote legislative proposals and drafts and present testimony before the General Assembly
- ☐ Work directly with the state legislature, the executive branch and others to shape effective public policy.
- ☐ Direct comprehensive studies on issues -- such as long-term care-- that impact older adults and persons with disabilities.

- Analyze demographic, economic, and service delivery trends in aging.
- Identify and research emerging issues and trends related to the quality of life of older adults.
- Use Results-Based Accountability to guide and focus our work.

Recently the Commission has focused on Livable Communities and has worked on rebalancing the Long Term Care System with a focus on Medicaid with “Money Follows the Person.” From 2006 through 2030, the 65+ population will increase by 64%. During this Legislative session with the budget looking promising, the Commission is investigating how the dollars will be invested with 6,000 nursing home beds coming off line. Other issues include: “Silver Alert” with training needed for handling persons with dementia; and Telehealth which is not covered in Connecticut.

Those interested in the work of the Commission can follow it on Twitter, Facebook and its website: www.cga.ct.gov/coa. There will also be a new newsletter available.

Senior Job Bank

Jim Doran reported that outreach to a broader audience is being conducted with the handing out of cards at various meetings and with a banner that will fly at Farmington and Main Streets. Fundraising has been successful. Work to strengthen and increase the volunteer office force is continuing. Credit goes to Bob Cave and a number of dedicated volunteers who have put their hearts and efforts into making the SJB a success.

Town Council

No report

Benefit Sheet

Ted Thomas stated that there is nothing new to report.

Human Services Report

Susan Huleatt introduced Sally Nolen, the Construction Coordinator for the Town’s Department of Community Services who spoke about the housing rehabilitation program which has been in existence for more than 30 years. It is funded by HUD and may be used by those over 65 who own and live in their homes. There are income guidelines. Monies may be used to correct code violations. Half of the payment for work done is a grant and half is a lifetime mortgage at 0% interest.

Susan spoke about the many referrals for people who have exhausted their CRT energy assistance benefit. There is still a small safety net through Operation Fuel and the Town that Cares. The need for assistance has increased this year.

Senior Center Reports

Gina Marino reported that the Hearing Lunch and Learn has been changed to May. In February programs include Technology Made Easy, Successful Aging (a 3-parter), the Fitness Center Open House, Party in Paradise with T-Bone, Black History, Eye Care, Mardi Gras Carnival, a Bagel Breakfast with Senator Bye, and Income Tax Help. If members renewed before Jan. 25 they were in a drawing for a gift cards and if they brought in a new member, they had another chance for a gift card. The West Hartford Senior Center is now on Facebook.

Kathy Faroni

The Elmwood Senior Center is on Facebook. Upcoming programs include a Fitness Center Open House, Polkas and Pierogies, Chinese New Year, OWLS, Drop-In Golf, Tax Help, Life Screening, and a Lunch and Learn on Home Safety. She noted the passing of Sandi Kush who

coordinated many programs. The ESC volunteers provided refreshments at the Town's Martin Luther King Day Celebration. The Food Collection will now continue year-round and there is a new Lions' Club program for collecting used eyeglasses.

New Business

None

The next Commission meeting is Tuesday, February 18, 2013.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Lynn Silverman
Volunteer Secretary